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**In what ways does principal leadership impact
on whānau engagement in a mainstream
secondary school?**

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy Māori at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand**

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ABSTRACT

In what ways does principal leadership impact on whānau engagement in a mainstream secondary school?

Principal leadership is an integral dimension in the schooling process. The principal ideally leads a team of professionals, guiding, supporting, and nurturing their development toward positive outcomes for Māori students including whānau engagement, to achieve this goal. In addition, s/he will ideally provide a framework of expectations, these being based on a theoretical and practical knowledge base as well as values that inform decision making.

Within the framework of Māori education, the dimension of whānau participation continues to be a dimension needing further exploration in terms of its potential contribution to positive academic, social and cultural achievements of students.

The focus of this thesis is to explore the role of the principal as both the leader of staff and the wider school community to support and enhance Māori student achievement in mainstream schooling. Principals lead from their knowledge base and their underpinning attitudes. It is the interweaving of these two elements, how attitudes inform behaviours and how these discrete set of skills required for leadership foster successful whānau participation which will be developed.

A role of the principal is to empower staff to take a leadership role. In terms of whānau participation, an area of the schooling process that continually needs fostering, principals set the direction for staff to develop relationships with the Māori community. The set of skills required to achieve this will be explored, expanded and reflected upon.

This thesis is a case study of one inner city secondary school which is a lead school in the Ministry of Education's Te Kauhua professional development project. Data will be collected from the principal, staff and whānau within this school community.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
Chapter One	1
1 Background	1
2 Design of the Study	8
3 Development of the Research Questions	9
4 Structure of the thesis	9
4.1 Chapter 1	9
4.2 Chapter 2	9
4.3 Chapter 3	10
4.4 Chapter 4	10
4.5 Chapter 5	10
4.6 Chapter 6	10
4.7 Chapter 7	10
5 Summary	11
Chapter Two	12
1 Introduction	12
2 Historical Perspective	12
3 The Educational Journey	13
4 Summary	17
Chapter Three	19
1 Introduction	19
1.1 Servant-Leadership	21
1.2 Situational Theory	22
1.3 Transactional and Transformational Leadership	22

1.4	Distributive Leadership	23
1.5	Kanohi Kitea	24
1.6	Charismatic Leadership	24
2	Principal Leadership	24
2.1	Pedagogical Leader	25
2.2	Moral Leadership	26
2.3	Relationships	27
2.4	Systems	27
2.5	Culture	28
3	Effective Leadership Styles	30
4	Summary	31
Chapter Four		33
1	Introduction	33
2	Whānau	34
3	Engagement	36
4	Engaging, Productive, Participatory Partnerships	40
5	Hui Taumata Matauranga 2006	41
6	Community Partnership	42
7	Summary	53
Chapter Five		54
1	Introduction	54
2	Specific Context	54
2.1	Sample	56
3	Māori Research	57
4	Qualitative Research	59
5	Case Study Research	60
5.1	The Central Research Question	60
6	Ethical Concerns	61
7	Selection of Data Collection Methods	62
7.1	Selection of Respondents	62
8	Limitations of the Study	63
9	Summary	64

Chapter Six	65
1 The Principal	65
1.1 Values	65
1.2 Leadership Style	66
1.3 External Factors	66
1.4 Leadership of Staff	67
1.5 Pedagogical Leadership	67
1.6 Terminology	67
1.7 Observations	68
1.8 Documentation	71
2 Staff Responses	72
2.1 Values	72
2.2 Leadership Style	73
2.3 External Factors	74
2.4 Leadership of Staff	75
2.5 Pedagogical Leadership	75
2.6 Terminology	76
3 Whānau Responses	78
3.1 Values	78
3.2 Leadership Style	79
3.3 External Factors	79
3.4 Leadership of Staff	79
3.5 Pedagogical Leadership	79
3.6 Terminology	79
4 Summary	81
Chapter Seven	82
1 Values	82
1.1 Outcomes	84
2 Leadership Style	85
2.1 Outcomes	86
3 External factors	87
4 Leadership of Staff	89
5 Pedagogical Leadership	90
6 Terminology	92
7 Model of Whānau Engagement	92

8	Summary	94
9	Conclusion	95
Appendix 1		97
Appendix 2		98
Appendix 3		99
Appendix 4		100
Appendix 5		103
Appendix 6		104
Appendix 7		105
Bibliography		125

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Te Whānau Harakeke	35
Figure 2: Overlapping Spheres of Influence – Epstein.....	43
Figure 3: Overlapping Spheres of Influence Adapted.....	45
Figure 4: Tamaiti/Rangatahi in relationship to iwi	46
Figure 5: Whānau Partnership Model for Mainstream Schools	52
Figure 6: Whānau Partnership Model for Mainstream Schools Revised.....	72
Figure 7: Staff Visual Model of Engagement	77

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Tahuri's Sites of Engagement	47
Table 2: Sites of Engagement adapted	48
Table 3: Target Template.....	69
Table 4: Target Template.....	85
Table 5: Triangulation of External Factors.....	87
Table 6: Triangulation of Pedagogical Leadership.....	90